

REMARKS

Claims 42-51 and 54 are pending and under consideration. Claims 1-41 and 52-53 were previously cancelled.

In the Office Action of August 11, 2004, claims 42-51 and 54 were rejected. With this Amendment, claims 42-44 and 54 are amended.

I. §112 Objection

Claims 43 and 44 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Applicants have amended claims 43 and 44 to recite a hydrolyzed polymer. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

II. 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Obviousness Rejection of Claims

Claims 42-51 and 54 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 0818474, EP 0818420 and Inagaki et al. in view of DE 4444032, Elfine, Monick et al., Horton, and Ramirez et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Amended claim 42, from which claims 43-51 depend, recites ion groups being introduced into the acrylonitrile unit; and said polymer and said acrylonitrile unit present in pieces *not larger than 3.5 mesh*.

Amended claim 54 also recites a cleansing method comprising the step of processing the polymers into small pieces *no larger than 3.5 mesh*.

In contrast, none of the references cited discloses nor suggests processing a polymer into small pieces no larger than 3.5 mesh. Specifically, in the primary reference, Inagaki et al, discloses the exact opposite of smaller pieces. Inagaki et al discloses the molecular weight cannot be too small. (See col. 7, lines 58-60). Additionally, the other references only disclose the composition of the polymer and not the weight of the polymer.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that the cited references, either alone or in any combination, do not teach or fairly suggest each and every limitation found in claims 42 and 54, and specifically processing a polymer into small pieces no larger than 3.5 mesh. Claims 43-51 all depend directly from claim 42 and are therefore patentable for at least the same reason that claim 42 is patentable. Applicants respectfully submit this rejection has been overcome and request that it be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that the application is in condition for allowance, with Claims 42-51 and 54 being patentable. Notice to that effect is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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